

ACORN

The Journal of The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario





ACORN

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to preserve buildings and
structures of
architectural merit and
places of natural beauty
or interest**

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From the Editor

*Learning to look is a pleasure;
The buildings will embrace your eyes.*

— Judith Lynch Waldhorn

*It is not enough to see architecture;
You must experience it.*

— Steen Eiler Rasmussen

Looking, touching, tramping through – certainly a lot of people experienced Toronto's heritage architecture on the last weekend in May. While estimates vary, upwards of 50,000 people took part in the first ever Doors Open Toronto. They had an amazing variety of buildings from which to choose – the Don Jail and Gooderham & Worts to the H.C. Harris Filtration Plant and artist Doris McCarthy's home (recently donated to the Ontario Heritage Foundation) on the Scarborough Bluffs.

It seemed an embarrassment of riches – like most people I had some trouble selecting a handful of buildings (all one could realistically do in the day I had free) from the 90 or so on display. And I was prepared to be a little flexible in substituting sites, where the lines were too long or the (remaining) time too short.

I confess that, of the wonderful places I visited, my favourite building was opened only last June! The exquisite McKinsey & Company offices, designed by Taylor, Hairiri and Pontarini Architects, sits on Charles Street West, on the university campus. Like Massey College on the same campus of a generation earlier, it's a building that confirms one's (too frequently dampened) enthusiasm for contemporary architecture in Toronto. Heritage of the future certainly.

Congratulations to Heritage Toronto, its partners and sponsors on such a successful event. The first ever Doors Open in Canada is sure to be even bigger and better next year and deserves to be imitated in other Ontario cities. Particular kudos to Catherine Nasmith, chair of the Toronto Preservation Board and member of the ACO Advisory Board.

* * * * *

With this issue we conclude our series of issues focusing on churches. Special thanks to James Douglass for his fascinating account of his group's efforts to preserve the delightfully plain Melville White Church in Belfountain.

Dan Schneider



President's Message

The 2000 Conference "Main Street Storeys" was, very appropriately, held in Port Hope this year. Sue Stickley and her committee did a terrific job organizing the events for the weekend – the opening reception at Homewood, conference proceedings at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, AGM at the Capitol Theatre and Sunday lunch at the Town Hall. Our thanks also to Peter Smith of Cobourg Branch for organizing the wonderful Sunday afternoon tour of Victoria Hall and the town of Cobourg.

At the Annual General Meeting we said goodbye to David Cuming, Diane McCormick and Maggie Whalley. We thank you for your contributions to the Executive of the ACO. This year, we welcome Jane Staunton, Kelly Spencer, Evelyn McLean and André Scheinman to our Board.

A special thanks goes to A. K. Sculthorpe for her years of service to the ACO and its Provincial Executive. Her knowledge and enthusiasm for the built and natural heritage of Ontario has been an encouragement to us all. She has earned some time off to pursue

other pleasures. However, I expect it won't be long before we hear from her again!

Mary Angela Tucker, now our Past President, has done much over the past two years in pursuing close working relationships with other heritage organizations and the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. She has some projects she wants to continue working on and I look forward to having her close at hand.

Our thanks to Alison Brown and Dan Schneider for co-chairing the By-Laws Review Committee for the past two years. They devoted an incredible amount of time to this project but the results are something we can all be proud of. We now have By-Laws that will take us into the new century, in language that everyone will be able to understand.

I look forward to working with the Executive and Council members, the Branches and the various committees and volunteers who are always so ready to step in and help.

Over the next couple of years, I would like to see the ACO expand its relationships with other heritage organizations. This started quite early in my term, with the proposed demise of the Concourse Building in Toronto. We have supported TRAC and the Toronto Preservation Board in every way that we can. As I am writing this, the fate of the Concourse Building is not known, but new relationships have been formed and we will continue to nurture them.

I would also like to see the ACO expand its membership throughout Ontario – most especially Northern Ontario. We need to become a truly "provincial" organization.

We also need to spend more time on "education" – getting the word out about the importance of our built heritage. It seems incredible to me that, after all this time, we still have to go in and fight building by building. We

will continue to be a voice for heritage conservation in Ontario.

The ACO Executive and Council invite you to join us for our annual Gala Dinner on November 4, 2000 at the Arts and Letters Club. More information will be sent to members early in the fall.

Until then, enjoy your summer and please contact us at our new e-mail address aco@on.aibn.com if you have any questions or concerns.

Pat Malicki

Council News

Gala Dinner 2000

Our fifth Gala Dinner will be held once again at the Arts and Letters Club in Toronto on November 4. The meal will be a gourmet delight and the speaker stimulating. A silent auction will allow you to bid on such items as a weekend get-away in cottage country and a prized antique donated by a generous member. Please note that the number of spaces is limited. Check the special mailing in early fall for more details. It's a great way to meet ACO members from other parts of the province.

Summer students

Once again the ACO head office will receive provincial government funding for two summer students. One will be hired as a Membership Development Assistant and will work to increase the public profile of the ACO by assisting in the preparation and design of promotional materials and information packages. The second student will be a Records Appraisal Assistant to help in the sorting, identification, organization and appraisal of the administrative records of the ACO. Both will work out of the 10 Adelaide Street East office.

HALP Program success

The Spruce Street cottage, advertised on the ACO web site as being a property at risk, has been sold to an interested party dedicated to restoring the house and keeping part of Toronto's historic Cabbagetown neighbourhood alive.

New Council members elected in Port Hope

Council extends congratulations to the ACO's newest councillors: Kelly Spencer, Treasurer; Jane Staunton, Secretary; and Evelyn McLean and André Scheinman, Members-at-Large.

Mary Glendinning

WINDSOR REGION BRANCH

2nd Annual Photo Contest

GET THE PICTURE!

This year's subject –
the doors of Windsor &
Essex County

Contest Closing Date is
July 31, 2000

For more details, please
contact:
Cheryl Worr
519-948-0776

Main Street Storeys and then some

The 2000 Annual ACO Conference was held in Port Hope, with an impressive 95 registrants. Participants met in the church hall of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church on Walton Street, Port Hope's main street, to explore the conference theme, "Main Street Storeys: Preserving the Legacy – Incentives and Challenges."

Following welcomes and opening remarks from Port Hope Branch President **Sue Stickely** and ACO President **Mary Angela Tucker**, Conference Chair **Philip Carter**, ACO Advisory Board Chair and self-styled "upper storey aficionado," introduced the conference theme. He noted that downtown main streets across Ontario are similarly lined with two-three storey buildings. We need to "look up" to better appreciate these buildings but will inevitably notice that many upper storeys are abandoned or have very marginal uses. An example of the potential of these spaces is Phil's own three storey building on Queen Street West in Toronto. The upper stories, converted to living quarters, boast many advantages – space, light, security, views and a rear deck. Phil is optimistic, indeed enthusiastic, about the future of upper storeys.

* * * * *

John Fleming, a planning administrator with the City of London, was the first scheduled speaker. His presentation, "Using Carrots Not Sticks In London," focused on a rather aggressive approach that the City of London has taken to help make heritage preservation in its downtown a viable and attractive proposition.

John described three general initiatives taken by London's City Council: estab-

lishing credibility and leadership through a willingness to invest in downtown; developing a range of economic incentives for private sector investment; and launching of the province's first NMSC Main Street Program.

With respect to financial incentives John gave details of new city programs and initiatives targeting downtown buildings, including financial loans with a 10 year payback period, building renovation loans to assist with meeting building/fire codes, property tax rebates, waiving of development charges and parking requirements, heritage grants (made from London's heritage endowment fund), density bonus-ing, and the provision of a dedicated building inspector for downtown structures. He spoke in glowing terms of London's experience with the (U.S.) National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street program, which provides excellent advice in four key areas: organization, design, economic restructuring ("improving the playing field") and promotion.

John then made an interesting and compelling case for "learning from the mall" – how the business/customer friendly aspects of the typical shopping mall can be applied to downtown. He concluded by emphasizing that we need to make heritage conservation an opportunity. Through "carrots not sticks" we must get at the underlying economic motives that result in private sector decisions to invest in downtown.

"Hamilton As Case Study" was the subject of the next presentation by **Nina Chapple**, recently retired planner from the City of Hamilton.

Revitalization of the downtown has been an on-going issue in Hamilton for the last half-century as the industrial city sought to regain its urban vitality following the Depression and Second World War. Now, in a post-industrial era, Hamilton has had to work even harder to keep its downtown alive as the city's economic basis shifts.

Downtown revitalization efforts in Hamilton have been undertaken with good intentions: some have proven highly successful, some painfully ill-advised and some too new to assess. Revitalization initiatives over the years have run the gamut from urban renewal to a new tax incentive program, from "modernizing" the city to embracing re-use of its heritage assets. Nina talked about what has worked and what hasn't and gave examples of new city programs. These include façade improvement grants (with differing requirements for upper storeys – to be restored – and ground floors – to be "opened up" and given appropriate signage); no interest loans for residential conversions of downtown structures; a tax incentive program for designated buildings (10 year rebates on property tax increases); and free downtown parking for two hours.

Nina stressed how critical it is to get local citizens involved in downtown revitalization studies if the mistakes of the past are to be avoided.

Finally she observed that a major goal for Hamilton must be to enhance its image – the "Steel Town" needs to play up its beauty and scenery, exemplified by such places as the McMaster University Campus and Coote's Paradise.

Next up was **John Stewart**, a landscape Architect with Commonwealth Historic Resource Management in Perth, who talked about "Perth Development and Revitalization."

In contrast to the previous speakers' focus on major urban centres, John's subject was the small town of Perth (population 6,000) and its challenges in promoting the use, restoration and upgrading of old buildings in its core.

He pointed out that smaller communities don't have a lot of money for incentives; however, Perth was the first community in Ontario to adopt a property tax rebate by-law in 1982.

John drew attention to a particular problem facing Perth and similar-sized towns: banks tend not to give commercial mortgages in smaller centres. A creative financing strategy has emerged to address this problem in the form of a community mortgage fund using RRSP money. The Perth fund is now about \$5 million with an average 9% rate of return.

In concluding his presentation John suggested that the ACO consider holding a future conference and AGM in his beautiful town.

* * * * *

After lunch Rod Stewart and Phil Carter led a walking tour of downtown Port Hope. Highlights were visits to the Royal Bank Opera House at John and Walton Streets and the upper floors of the building at Queen and Walton Streets.

The afternoon session began with **Christopher Borgal**, an architect with Morrison Hershfield of Ottawa, giving his "Perspectives on the Second Level."

Chris's rambling, entertaining "musings" took us from the railway to the computer in the influence of technology on main street life. He pointed out that, with the coming of the railroad, communities in Ontario tended to grow up 10-15 miles apart, and gave as examples the Huron County towns of Goderich, Blyth, Bayfield and Wingham. He suggested that, with the advent of the automobile and our greater mobility as a society, our sense of architecture has been diminished – people's sense is now more one of moving through or moving past buildings and places rather than one of approaching or arriving at a place. Our communities need to value and enhance their focal points and vistas – towers, for example, provide a sense of place, a sense of core, of being in the heart of a community.

Chris warned about "simplification", or "giving the world over to traffic engi-

neers." Paradoxically, he said, society – and its landscapes and built environment – suffers degradation because "simplicity" can make things so complicated!

Michael McClelland, an architect with ERA Architects of Toronto, then spoke about "Recent Heritage Policy Changes in the City of Toronto."

Picking up on the "carrots not sticks" theme of the morning session, Michael talked about the incentives recommended in the "Municipal, Provincial and Federal Tax Incentives for Heritage Conservation" report which was recently adopted by the City of Toronto. This report was prepared by the urban Planning and Development Services Department as part of the Official Plan review process.

Michael gave many examples of incentives and approaches currently being considered by the city, including:

- the use of "mini-districts" – street by street heritage conservation districts that avoid some of the problems and expense of large-scale districts
- multi-use zoning – downtown areas such as the "Kings" in Toronto permit great flexibility in the use of older commercial buildings
- property tax rebates or "tax back" grant programs
- creation of a distinct heritage property tax class or sub-class
- extending demolition control powers now in effect in "old" Toronto and Scarborough to the whole of the new city – this will require special legislation.

Pointing out that municipalities can only go so far on their own, Michael drew attention to the need for senior governments to introduce heritage supportive tax measures, such as:

- a federal tax credit for heritage rehabilitation
- a GST rebate for heritage-related expenditures
- a provincial tax credit supplementing the federal one

- a long-term retail sales tax rebate for heritage-related work (Ontario has introduced a temporary one effective until December 31, 2000)
- rebates of the provincial (education) portion of the municipal property tax to help make property tax rebate programs more attractive.

Michael pointed out that in the United States about 1,000 projects a year benefit from U.S. rehabilitation tax incentives and went through a number of interesting examples of such projects demonstrating the difference tax credits can make.

Following concluding remarks by Phil Carter, Chris Borgal gave a tour of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church. Chris was the architect for the church's recent restoration project.

* * * * *

At the conference banquet Saturday night at Lent's Lane Room, A.K. **Sculthorpe** and **Rod Stewart** gave an entertaining and occasionally impassioned perspective on preservation ups and downs on Walton Street – "20 years after flood and fire."

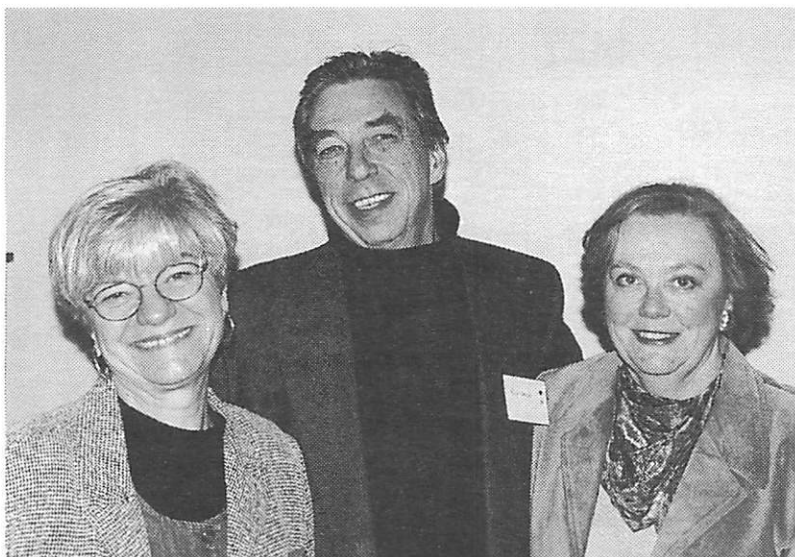
Congratulations on a great conference everyone!

Dan Schneider

Branch and other contributors please note:

**Deadline for ACORN
Winter Issue –
October 2, 2000**

**This issue, to appear by
December 1, will include
Branch reports.
Please try to include an
illustration with your
report.**



1. Sue Stickley, Phil Carter and Mary Angela Tucker at the annual conference

Main Street Storeys: Preserving the Legacy – Incentives and Challenges

The 2000 Annual ACO Conference



2. Mary Angela Tucker and Pat Malicki at the Annual General Meeting



3. Rod Stewart and A.K. Sculthorpe at the conference dinner



4. Sue Stickley at the tree dedication ceremony in memory of Marion Garland

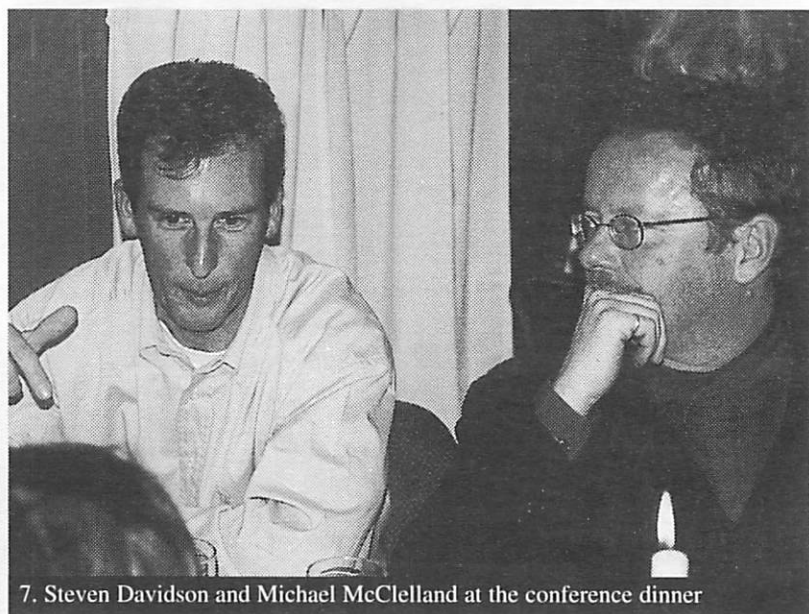
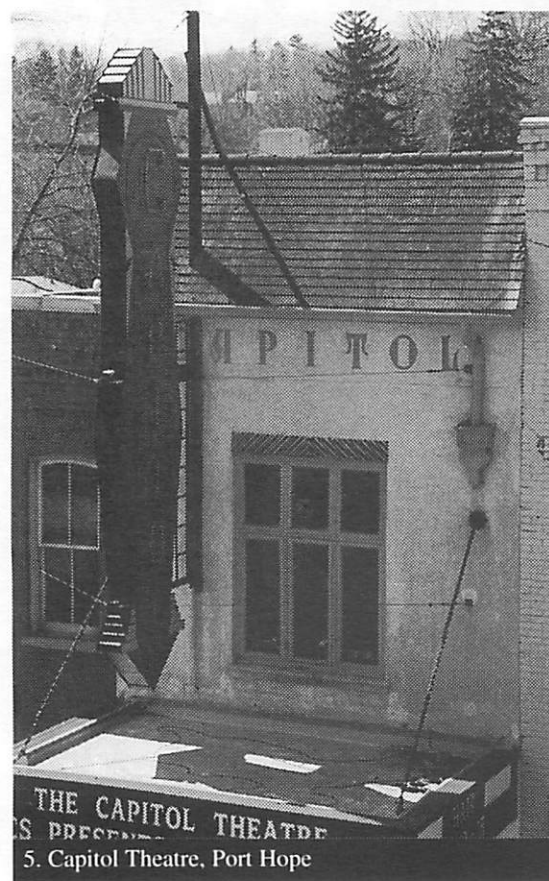
The 2000 Annual ACO Conference



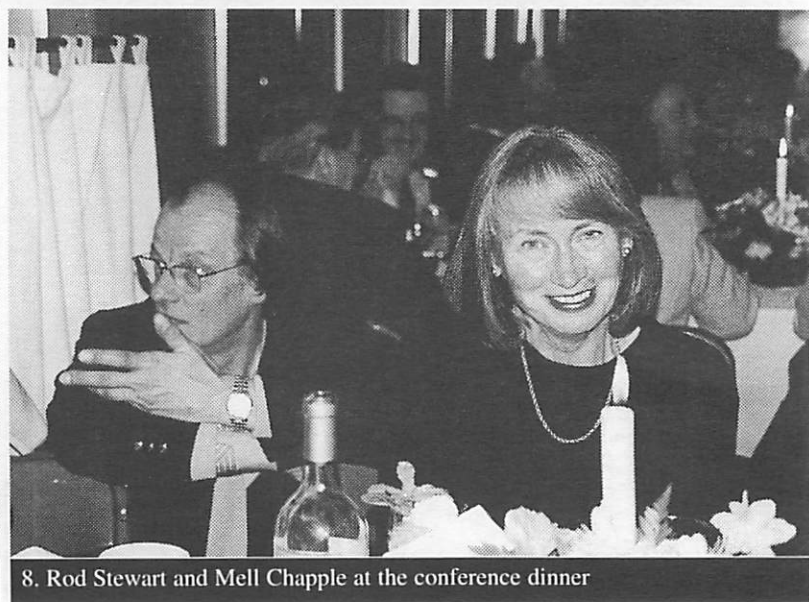
6. Old advertisements in the Royal Bank Opera House, Port House

photo credits:

1, 2, 4, 5, 6 Dan Schneider
3, 7, 8 Mary Angela Tucker



7. Steven Davidson and Michael McClelland at the conference dinner



8. Rod Stewart and Mell Chapple at the conference dinner

An Historie Of Yon Anciente Kirk Called Melvil, or Saving the Melville White Church

In Shakespeare's *Henry V* the chorus says, "On your imaginary senses work/Suppose within the girdle of these walls/Are now confined two mighty monarchies."

Let us today use our imaginations to picture what is now Mississauga Road in 1837. It was a narrow, corrugated carriage path "confined" by "mighty" forests. Just a little north Indian tribes had only recently stopped camping to fish and hunt at what is now known as the forks of the Credit River. And a stalwart crew of pioneer Scots was replacing a rude shack that served as a school and a church with a beautifully crafted Presbyterian Church.

The new building was named after Andrew Melville, an early follower of the great Scots church reformer John Knox. The first minister, Daniel McMillan, had to walk several miles through the woods to take services. Even before that a Rev. Andrew Bell walked 25 miles once a month to conduct services at the church/school. Many of the congregation walked up to ten miles to attend! The congregation came by horse and carriage and in the winter by sleigh, from as far away as Erin. In these early days the church had wonderfully varied and colourful ministers. McMillan often preached in Gaelic. There was an Irishman, a "Mulatto" and a blind Syrian who was an authority on "eastern customs."

Now we move through time to 1964, when, alas, a declining congregation forced the closing of the church doors. A year or so later the Credit Valley Conservation Authority took over the

property and, except for the occasional Thanksgiving service, the fabric declined even further until a final service in 1984. Some faithful volunteers such as the late Wally McLeod and Norm Wrycraft from Belfountain did as much restorative maintenance as possible over the next few years.

In 1994 it was discovered that a plan was afoot to demolish this venerable heritage building. The newly constituted Belfountain Heritage Society, with a mandate to "preserve and protect the unique heritage of Belfountain and the surrounding area," seized upon the church as a worthy restoration project. The BHS has a stalwart nucleus of a dozen hardy souls, and, a bit like those early pioneers, we started with brush clearing. One of our members was hospitalized for four days from an attack of poison ivy. Were the spirits of the cemetery telling us to mind our own business?

Denis Héroux, of the ACO Advisory Board, did a wonderful report for us on the condition of the church. He described the structure as follows: "It is eminently worthy of restoration... The White Church is one of the few remaining pre-Victorian era timber frame churches... The modest size of the church, the quality of the natural light filtering through the windows and the simplicity of the decor make the building highly adaptable."

But the main task over the next several years were the petitions and presentations to the Town of Caledon necessary for the town to assume ownership of the church for a dollar. During this time motions leading up to this happy day over a year ago were almost always passed unanimously by the Town Council. It was a boon to our cause that enlightened heritage policies for Caledon had been shepherded through the years by the indomitable Heather Broadbent.

1999 ADVISORY BOARD PROJECTS

The ACO Advisory Board completed reports on the following projects in 1999.

| PROJECT NAME & LOCATION | BOARD MEMBER |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Waterfront Districts, Oakville | Chris Pickard |
| Daniel David Palmer House, Port Perry | Ian McGillivray |
| 55 Brock Avenue, Toronto | Denis Héroux |
| Old School, Millbrook | Andrew Connidis Phil Carter |
| Walker House, Kincardine | Peter Stewart |
| St. George's Memorial Church, Oshawa | Stephen King |
| Libbey Canada Inc., Wallaceburg | John Rutledge Chris Andreae |
| Christ Church, Lynedoch | Bill Moffet |
| Six Nations Confederacy, Oshweken | Denis Héroux |
| Langshaff Jail Farm Water Tower, Richmond Hill | Eric Jokinen |
| Auchmar, Hamilton | Alan Seymour |

Fundraising efforts included direct mailings, company solicitations, a successful appeal to the Trillium Foundation, and a celebration last May when the church doors were opened once again after many years. This event entailed lots of cleaning – and sweeping away of tons of dead flies. Despite a heavy rainfall hundreds showed up for a day complete with fiddlers, crafts, an auction and displays. All this has raised the funds for a new roof – and as this is penned, the church is about to be hoisted heavenward to be lowered onto a new foundation, and a new wide-pined floor laid.

When completed this heritage gem will be used for concerts, recitals, readings, heritage displays, art exhibits, weddings and a location shoot for films.

None of this would have been possible without the help of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario. Use of the ACO's charitable status for tax receipts, when other organizations refused us, allowed the BHS to embark on our fundraising projects.

Among other tasks the BHS also has an on-going project researching our pre-Victorian buildings for plaques and the restoration of our 1890 community hall.

Through the last few years it has been heart warming that relatives and descendants of the congregation buried in the Melville churchyard have dropped in to add stories and anecdotes of the early years. A treasure trove of papers and records were recently donated by Ms. Maise Sharp whose history with the church goes back to the 1870s. All this adds to our understanding of the church's rich past and brings to life the growing community in this part of Ontario.

Our imaginary senses work!

James B. Douglass

James B. Douglass is President of The Belfountain Heritage Society

Pelee Island's Stone Lighthouse Under Restoration

Pelee Island is located in Lake Erie, a one hour ferry ride from the mainland. It is eight miles long by 3.5 miles wide with an area of 11,000 acres. Long inhabited by First Nations peoples, it was acquired by lease from the Ojibway in 1815 by William McCormick. The attraction was the great stands of red cedar and white oak for logging. In time, McCormick quarried limestone and raised livestock. The benign climate was also conducive to the planting of vines, sugar cane and fruit orchards. By the turn of the century, the population peaked at 1,000. Today permanent residents number about 240.

Shipping was hazardous in the early days. Ron Tiessen, curator of the Pelee Island Heritage Centre, has on record a list of 270 local shipwrecks. To try to relieve matters, a stone lighthouse was built in 1833 on the northwest spit of the island. It operated until 1902 when a new off-shore lighthouse was built. The lantern was removed and the building was abandoned in 1909.

Now 90 years later, Ron Tiessen and local residents have initiated steps to repair and restore the lighthouse. Funding was approved by the federal government's Human Resources Development Council and work began in May 2000 to be completed by the fall. The restoration architect is Nick Hill.

Restoration will include

repointing stonework; repairing the stone dome at the top of the lighthouse; rebuilding the interior 40 foot high wood circular staircase, the wood platform and the eight-foot-in-diameter, ten-sided metal lantern. Also to be re-installed are the six large timber outriggers that propped up the outside walls shortly after the lighthouse was built. These stabilized the lighthouse after it began to tilt! The one degree tilt is quite visible to this day, although the outriggers are no longer needed for structural reasons.

To achieve an accurate restoration, old photographs and records were analyzed and visits made to similar vintage lighthouses on the Great Lakes. Builders restoring the lighthouse include Larry Gervais, a carpenter on Pelee Island; Brian Bartlett, a stone mason from Charing Cross; and Jim Wallace, an iron worker from Goderich.

Nicholas Hill



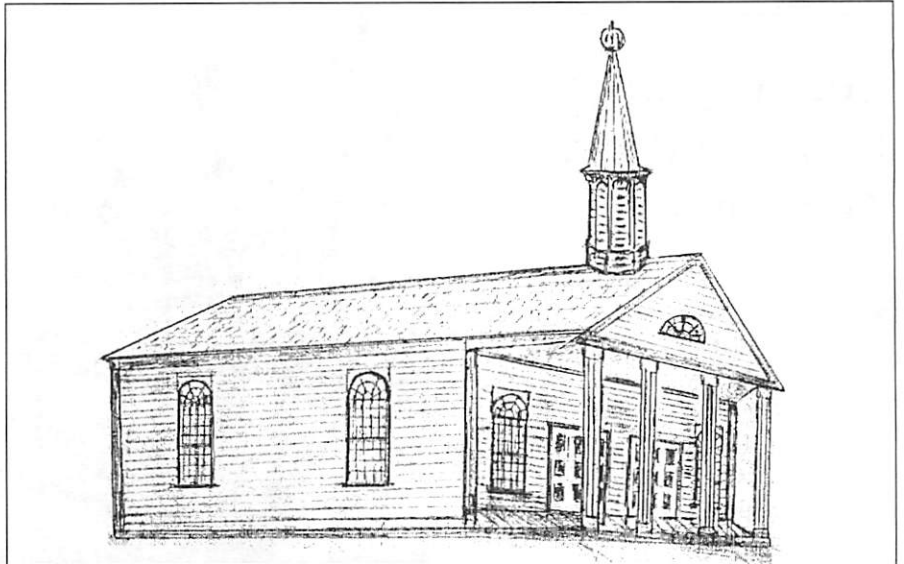
Pelee Island Lighthouse, as it looked from 1833 to 1909
photo: National Archives of Canada

Old Adolphustown Church Gets New Home

Since ACORN has launched a series on church architecture, I felt that a restoration project I have recently undertaken might be of some interest.

At the request of the members of the Parish of St. Alban the Martyr, Adolphustown, I have disassembled, labelled, and stored old St. Paul's Anglican Church, Adolphustown, erected in 1823. St. Alban's was begun in 1884 as a memorial church to the United Empire Loyalists who landed at the site in 1784. When it was consecrated circa 1891, old St. Paul's was relegated to use as a parish hall, and thus began a slow but steady decline over the next one hundred years.

Besides its architectural importance, the church could be considered historically significant for the fact that Sir John A. MacDonald's parents were



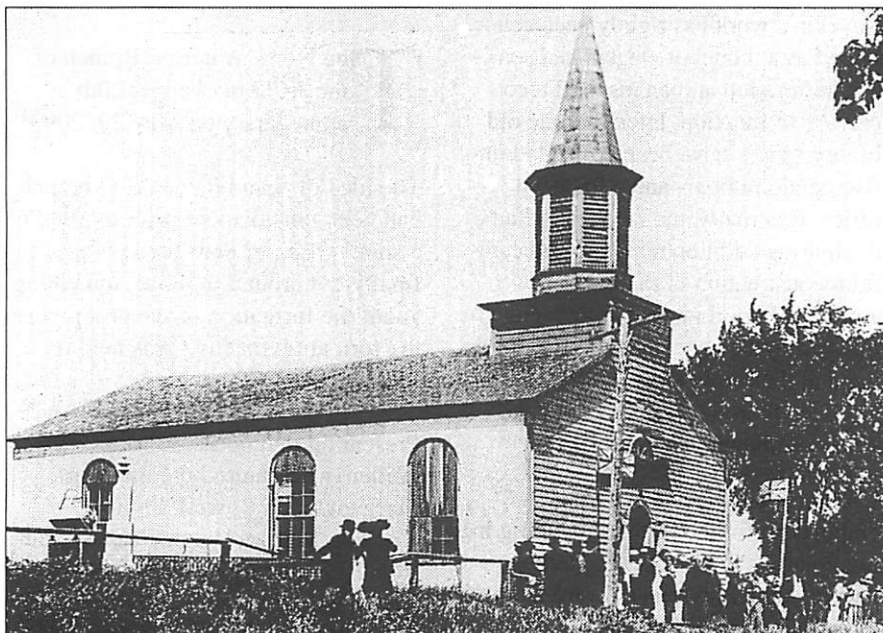
St. Paul's, Adolphustown, as it may have appeared in 1823 sketch: John Brisley

members of this parish. Undoubtedly, Sir John A. "slept" in his parent's pew as a young boy.

The accompanying archival photo from 1912 shows the church as it appeared in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The deconstruction and archival research done by my wife have revealed a rather delightful example of neo-classical architecture rendered in timber frame and clapboard, as shown in the accompanying sketch. Originally the façade facing the road

sported a pediment with central fan light, supported on four octagonally shaped pillars. In 1863 it was decided to enclose the open portico. This new interior space now provided two small vestry rooms. With the addition of a staircase a choir gallery was created which looked down into the church proper. Encased in the front wall over the altar was a beautiful 20 over 20 dome-topped window with flanking side lights. To complete the transformation the building was stuccoed and a Mr. Outwater submitted his account in 1871 for building the new church steeple and fence.



St. Paul's, Adolphustown, in 1912

photo courtesy John Brisley

I intend to restore St. Paul's to its original 1823 appearance on property in Prince Edward County. Any information regarding this church would be gratefully accepted. I am particularly interested to know what the pews of a humble Anglican church of 1823 would look like. Part of our research revealed that the pews were "cut down" in 1864; with most churches ripping out the old uncomfortable pews it is very difficult to determine their original design. If any readers know of extant Anglican churches of the same time period here or in the United States that I could visit please contact me.

John Brisley

Cobourg Church Building Proves Adaptable

Cobourg's Old Library at 18 Chapel Street began life as a "church building," if not a church. It has recently been restored and designated and named winner of the Ontario Historical Society's President's Award. The following paragraphs were part of LACAC's case for its designation:

"It is surprising that the Old Library was not among the first buildings designated in Cobourg, as it had landmark status long before designation came into being. It was designed to be one of several important ecclesiastical buildings that gave height to nineteenth-century Cobourg and kept the impression of Sunday lasting through the week.

Its first function was as a Methodist Sunday School and assembly hall. Thus it belonged to a family of imposing Methodist buildings that included Victoria College and the present Trinity United Church and helped assert Cobourg's importance in the larger world of Ontario Methodism – a religious movement that reached powerfully into secular society, government and education. (Everyone knows the name of the Cobourg Methodist Egerton Ryerson, who devoted three decades to creating Ontario's system of public education.)

The building continued to play a central role in community life in later years when it became the Cobourg Public Library, and a claim for its historical importance cannot omit to notice its contribution to local literary life and literacy, its meaning to generations of Cobourg children who knew it as a place where kindly women read to them, and its function as a meeting place for community groups such as the



Old Cobourg Library, formerly Methodist Church Hall

photo courtesy Bill Halewood

"Social Planning Council", which met there to hear speakers and eat bag lunches.

Rick Lovekin's restorations, undertaken in recent years when the building has been superseded as a public library, have not diminished its claims to designation, but in fact enhanced them.

Lovekin's work has rightly been celebrated as a model of elegant and sensitive restoration and an inspired reconceiving of function. Internally the old library spaces have been converted into five condominiums and a financial office. Externally, the facade has had a disfiguring addition removed and careful reconstruction of the original entrance. Period integrity has been restored to the appearance of the building and thus to its street, while its use has been thoroughly updated for the needs of modern Cobourg.

LACAC has already expressed its enthusiasm for the restored building in nominations for a Cobourg Heritage Award and a President's Award from the Ontario Historical Society."

Bill Halewood

North Waterloo Region Branch Celebrates Twenty Years

The North Waterloo Branch of the ACO marked its 20th anniversary on May 29, 2000.

The idea of founding an ACO branch had been talked about prior to 1980 but a small group of dedicated people finally got around to doing something about the formation of the group when the formation meeting was held on January 15, 1980.

Present on that occasion were Jeff Weller (who chaired the meeting), Marg and Bob Rowell, Phyllis Kitchen, Murray Haight, Wendy and Ron Cascadden, Lois Schultz, Ron Kropf, Ruth Gramlow, Ray Smith, Bev and Peter Grierson, Joye Krauel, Christopher Moore and Peggy Booker.

Our guests were Pat Rosebrugh and Katherine Hebblethwaite, members of Heritage Cambridge, and William Moffet, President of the ACO.

The executive worked hard for the next few months to organize the first public meeting which was held May 29, 1980 at the Mutual Life Auditorium. The pamphlet to advertise the meeting and the mailing list of over 100 people were prepared by Wendy Collishaw. We were fortunate to be able to tour the historic office building of the Mutual, now Clarica.

Constructed in 1912 by the architectural firm of Darling and Pearson, the original building is a masterpiece of design and embellishment. The interior of the building is stunning and includes beautiful plasterwork.

The guest speaker of the day was Peter John Stokes and the topic was "What to look for when buying an old house." The talk was illustrated by slides and the evening ended with a social hour. It was the most successful public meeting we have ever held. One hundred people attended and some months after that our membership also numbered 100; we have never reached that number since.

The branch has held many public meetings and house tours and lectures since then and has been reasonably successful. Our numbers are now down to about 30 members, but we have a strong if very small executive who organizes events. One issue that we have been involved in for many years is the re-use of the Waterloo County Gaol and Governor's House.

Both of these buildings have been vacant for many years but finally a plan for their future use is being drawn up. We have also been involved in the

funding and planning of a Millennium Courtyard Garden in the gaol property. In the past we have helped fund further work at the Joseph Schneider House in Kitchener and aided in the restoration of the 1877 Castle Kilbride in Baden.

Shortly after the branch was established we were given a permanent seat on the executive of the Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation and one of our executive members has always been our representative on the Foundation. We were fortunate enough to have received a start up grant from the Foundation and we also received some funds from a developer when we found a buyer for an early

partite, with the tops of the windows somewhat curved suggesting an ogee arch. In the middle is a solid oak door with two 'L'-shaped hinges and a strap hinge made of iron. The windows in the door and the transom and sidelight windows are of small diamond-shaped leaded glass.

The house is stucco, painted cream with green trim. Three very handsome dormers with bellcast roofs grace the lower section of a long steep gable roof that has three tall granite field-stone chimneys on its front slope. In 1999 the home received the Mike Wagner Heritage Award from Heritage Kitchener (LACAC). Mike Wagner was a former member of Kitchener Council, Chairman of Heritage Kitchener and a member of our branch.

Our speaker for the evening will be Nick Hill, an architect, planner and landscape architect, who will speak about his work with the conservation authority near Kingsville. Nick is restoring the Pelee Island lighthouse. He will also talk about his work on the Mary-Allen Neighbourhood Conservation District in Waterloo and the restoration of the Sheave Tower in Blair. We plan to invite as many former members as possible and hopefully most of the previous presidents will also be able to attend as well as representatives from the ACO's Ontario Council.

We hope the next twenty years will see our numbers grow and our executive become larger, so that we may make even more ambitious plans in the future for fulfilling our mandate. This mandate is to educate people about the architecture in our region and to encourage that as many as possible of our older buildings receive the respect they deserve.

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Marg Rowell



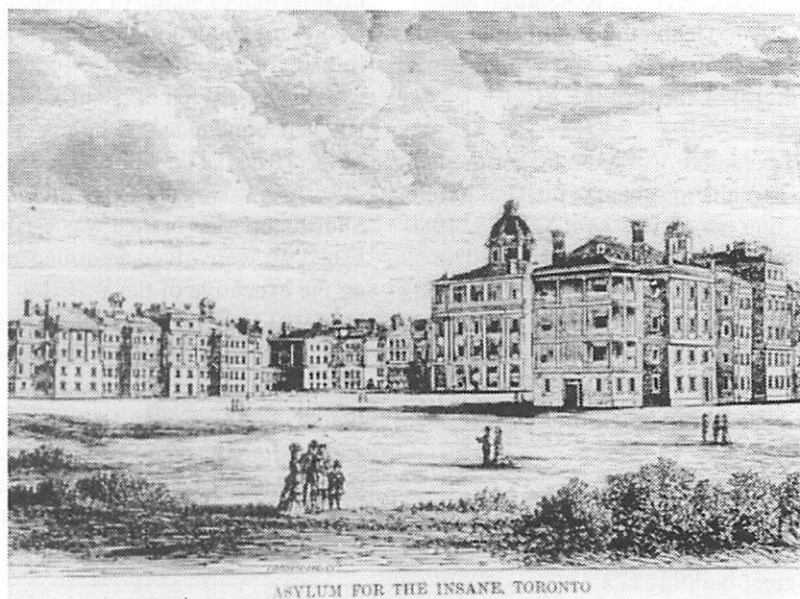
"Green Gables," Queen St. N., Kitchener sketch courtesy Marg Rowell

house in Kitchener that became part of a new development. We also found a buyer for an early log house that stood in the way of a commercial complex.

To celebrate our 20th anniversary we will be holding the meeting at a lovely 1907 house on Queen Street North in Kitchener. It is now a temporary residence for visiting executives. The owner, Margaret Stacey, has renovated the interior from the former nursing home use to an elegant venue for meetings and wedding receptions. The house is an elaborate cottage, "west coast" style, with a five bay ground floor and beautiful enclosed front porch and porte cochere.

The four large front windows are tri-

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your copy we cannot guarantee availability. Mail your cheque today.

News From & About ACO Members

Editor's Note: This section features news and information from and about Conservancy members. ACORN welcomes submissions from our readers.

More awards for members!

The following ACO members were recipients of the Ontario Heritage Foundation's 1999 Heritage Community Recognition Program awards:

Clay Benson of Port Hope
Evelyn McLean of Windsor
Leah Wallace of Flamborough
Marg Rowell of Waterloo

Dan Atkinson of Belleville has been made a Fellow by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario, the highest award in the accountancy profession. In part this award recognizes Dan's volunteer work for the ACO.

Prince of Wales Prize nominees

The Towns of Port Hope and Markham have been nominated for the prestigious Prince of Wales Prize, awarded annually by the Heritage Canada Foundation to a municipality for stewardship of the built environment. Port Hope and Markham are the two Ontario nominees in a field of nine municipalities from across Canada. The winner will be announced this September at Heritage Canada's conference in Calgary.

Letter to the Editor

I am writing in response to the most recent issue of ACORN and to express my distress at the errors that I find in the article about Brant County ["Unwanted Churches in Brant," *Spring 2000*], especially the part about Farringdon Independent Church. This church was founded in 1833. It has just celebrated its 165th anniversary. There have been three buildings, the first built in 1839, the second in 1855

and the present one in 1949. I do not know where Mr. Keefe found the 1930s date. Nor do I know his authority for stating that the congregation is made up of "a small number of wealthy local families." The membership, like that of this community, is composed of a mixture – rich, poor and the majority between the two. I cannot account for his remarks about "ladies with white gloves." Needless to say, it is completely wrong!

In a later paragraph, the author refers to the Sanderson Centre for the Performing Arts as an early 20th century movie house. This is misleading. It was built in 1919 for live theatre, principally vaudeville.

The author has not verified his facts. I know that the information is readily available and I am shocked that a reputable publication should present such material as authoritative.

Ruth Stedman, Brantford

The Port Hope Branch ACO Annual House Tour

Saturday, September 30, 2000

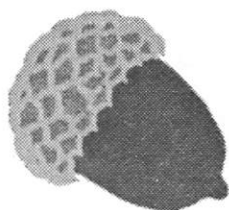
Homes on view:

Audrey & Noel Simpson, 89 Brown Street, Port Hope
Moya McPhail & Ralph Walker, 20 King Street, Port Hope
Adele & John Sebert, 322 Ridout Street, Port Hope
Will & Jennie Ryan, Durham House County Road #10, Hope Township
Debbie & John Doherty, 78 Pine Street, Port Hope
Lois & Lynn Brown, 76 John Street, Port Hope
Meredith & John Boughen, Mill House, County Road #10, Hope Township
Kiloran German & Elizabeth Fowler, 2 Baldwin Street, Port Hope

The beautiful Port Hope United Church at Brown and South Streets is celebrating its 150th anniversary and will be included on the tour.

Tickets for this tour sell out quickly and will be on sale in mid-June. The cost is \$20 per person and proceeds go towards ACO projects in the community. For tickets or additional information call (905) 885-5790. For information on Port Hope and our many charming bed & breakfast accommodations call 1-888-PORT HOPE.

The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario
Suite 204, 10 Adelaide Street East
Toronto, Ontario M5C 1J3



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